

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Nutrition Update

NOVEMBER 2004

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Delaware is the 52nd State Agency with an approved 2004 Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) Plan.
- FSNE Meeting to follow the FNS National Nutrition Education Conference. September 15, 2005, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

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Present at the National Nutrition Education Conference!

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is now accepting abstracts for its 2nd National Nutrition Education Conference. This conference is scheduled for September 12-14, 2005 in Arlington, Virginia.



photographs showcasing effective programs and projects.

Presentations should be interactive and exemplify the conference theme of *Nutrition Connections: People, Programs, Science, Community*.

Don't miss this chance to share your successes with Federal, State and local staff who work with USDA's nutrition assistance programs. Submit your abstract by January 7, 2005.

Submit abstracts on your best Food Stamp Nutrition Education activities for any of the following types of presentations:

- State/Local Educational Session: ninety minute sessions that include oral presentations by more than one speaker.

- Individual Oral Presentation: 15-20 minute oral presentation made by one individual.
- Poster Presentation: display using text, charts, graphs, illustrations, and/or



Visit the conference Web site for abstract review criteria, guidance and submission information:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/nutritionconference>

Framework Update

The proposed Framework for Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE), which was posted for public comment on the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Web site in May 2004, has sparked a lively discussion on how to improve FSNE

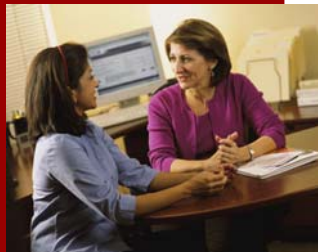
efforts.

The public comment period for the draft Framework ended on July 27. About 1,200 comments were submitted.

FNS is currently analyzing the comments and

continuing discussions with State and local partners to resolve issues identified in the analysis.

Stay tuned for more information on the Framework and the 2006 FSNE Plan Guidance.



Data collection for Systems Review Study begins soon.

“This winter, researchers will contact States in an effort to capture the diversity of FSNE activities occurring nationwide.”

Describing Food Stamp Nutrition Education

Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) can take many forms. Some are unique to a particular locality while others are modeled elsewhere in the country. This winter, researchers will contact States in an effort to capture the diversity of FSNE activities occurring nationwide.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has contracted with Abt Associates to conduct the FSNE Systems Review, a study which aims to provide a comprehensive and systematic picture of FSNE operations among State food stamp agencies, FSNE implementing agencies, and local FSNE projects. In winter 2004, Abt will ask all State food stamp agencies and their FSNE implementing agencies to complete a Web-based

survey about fiscal year 2004 FSNE activities. Questions will cover a variety of topics including: organizational structure; planning and decision making; partnerships and coordination; target audiences, messages and delivery methods; and monitoring, staffing, and budget issues.

In spring 2005, Abt will conduct in-person interviews with a sample of 34 implementing agencies and their 29 associated State food stamp agencies (see map below). Interview questions will build upon responses to the Web-based survey and provide a deeper understanding of FSNE operational and decision making processes. A sample of local projects and partner organizations for each selected

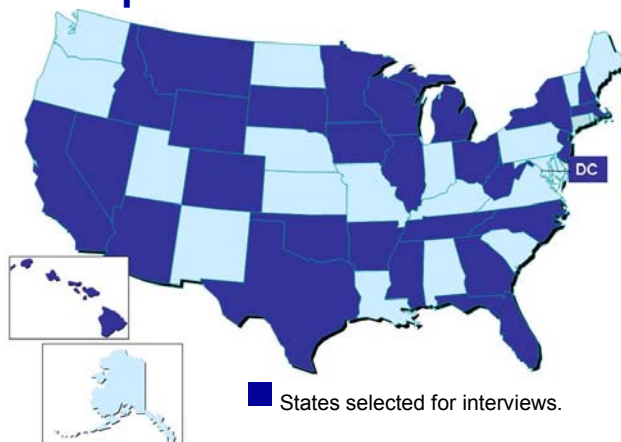
implementing agency will also be interviewed.

FNS would like to thank the State food stamp agencies, implementing agencies, and program partners in Connecticut, Maryland and Washington for their help pre-testing the Web-based and in-person instruments this summer. Their time and comments helped craft easy-to-understand questions and, ultimately, an instrument with fewer questions.

The study's final report and a public-use data file will be available in fiscal year 2006. The report will allow State agencies to see how their FSNE efforts compare with national trends and could assist in future FSNE planning.

States Selected for In-person Interviews

Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.



Nutrition Education for Older Food Stamp Audiences



Under development!
An intervention targeting
60-74 year-olds.

based on the findings of a literature and promising practices review. These items will be tested with program cooperators, nutrition educators and the target audience.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is designing an intervention and accompanying staff guidance focused on increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity among low-income adults aged 60-74 years old.

Currently, project staff are developing the staff guidance and participant materials,

Below is a preview of the project components:

- **A literature review** to obtain current information on nutrition and physical activity behaviors, relevant nutrition education practices, and assess current FNS program participation rates among older Americans.

- **Identification of promising practices** that have proven effective in changing nutrition and physical activity behaviors among the target population as determined from the literature and expert review.

- **Development of staff guidance** to assist in training and facilitating the intervention.

- **Creation of participant materials** that reinforce behavior modification strategies.

Visit the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection for updates on available FNS materials.



New on the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection
www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp

- Food Stamp Program Photo Gallery
- Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ Public Service Announcements
- Chart of Approved Federal Funding for Fiscal Year 2004.

Reporting Form Pilot Testing Underway

Work on the development of an Education and Administrative Reporting System (EARS) continues during the next few months with pilot testing in six States. EARS will collect uniform national data on food stamp funded nutrition education activities.

ORC Macro, a social science research firm hired by the Food and Nutrition Service, is currently conducting the pilot tests in Kansas, Illinois, West Virginia, New York, New Mexico and California. These tests will

primarily assess the usability of the EARS Reporting Form and identify areas of the form needing revision.

The pilot tests involve both State and local staff and provide an opportunity to determine how States and implementing agencies can prepare for the new reporting process and collect accurate nutrition education data. The tests include: a site visit, completion of the EARS Reporting Form, and a post-reporting survey. The pilot testing began in October 2004 and will conclude

in January 2005.

FNS is collaborating with a variety of stakeholders representing State, implementing, local, and academic partners in the development of EARS. The data collected will inform management decisions, support policy initiatives, and provide documentation for legislative, budget and other requests that support planning within the agency.



Contractors head to six States to test reporting form.

Food Stamp Nutrition Education

Activities to Watch in 2005



This year's nutrition education plans feature the continuation and development of many exciting projects. Several State agencies are also working to strengthen relationships between Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) and the Food Stamp Program (FSP). Below are a few examples of these efforts.

These activities are part of larger State FSNE plans, just one ingredient in the overall recipe. They serve to reinforce key messages, help market FSNE services to the food stamp population, and foster a cooperative relationship between those who administer food stamp benefits and those who deliver FSNE. We acknowledge these States' willingness to explore new territory and look forward to hearing about what worked and what didn't.

Arkansas—In October, Arkansas mailed an insert describing FSNE and its potential benefits to food stamp households. The mailer included tips on family mealtimes and a nutritious recipe. Arkansas is receiving positive comments on the information and plans to monitor any changes in contacts as a result of the mailing.

Arizona—The Arizona Nutrition Network is continuing its "Adopt a Food Stamp Office" program that links FSNE activities with food stamp offices at the local level. Local Network project staff regularly visit local food stamp offices and strive to make the food stamp office environment "nutrition friendly" using murals, print materials, activity centers and other educational items. They also talk with food stamp office staff about FSNE services and provide lessons for food stamp clients in the office lobby.

Illinois—The Illinois Department of Human Services Offices (IDHS) is coordinating the statewide expansion of the Chicago-based "Healthy Eating, Healthy Living Options" project initiated by the Beatrice Caffrey Youth Service. The project provides nutrition education in Family and Community Resource Centers (FCRCs; formerly known as Public Aid Offices) and related food demonstrations. Information on other FSNE activities and public services are also provided to participants.

Massachusetts—Food stamp offices in seven cities will provide nutrition education activities similar to Arizona's "Adopt a Food Stamp Office" program.

Nebraska—The State Agency Management Team has invited the implementing agency's FSNE Coordinator to participate in meetings with the FSP Payment Accuracy Committee. At these meetings, a plan is being developed on how to improve the referral system between the food stamp offices and FSNE.

South Carolina—The State has developed a video of an interactive play, entitled *Taking Charge in the Meadowland*, that teaches children (grades K-3) about healthy food choices and active play. During the upcoming year, the State will use the video in food stamp offices, eligible schools, and other appropriate venues.

Virginia—Virginia Cooperative Extension, the State FSNE implementing agency, is working with local food stamp offices to mail newly certified Food Stamp Program households information about FSNE activities and provide a toll-free telephone number for those seeking additional information. Food stamp office waiting areas will feature posters and brochures about FSNE services. Extension is also developing a related continuous-loop video.

